

Petroleum and Petrochemical Bulletin

**VESSEL OPERATIONS AND CARGO
INSPECTORS – SAFE WORKING**

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Summary

IFIA member companies are committed to the safety and welfare of their employees. However, inspectors continue to be expected to work on inland barges, and occasionally marine vessels, unaccompanied by a representative of the barge or vessel. This situation is recognised as undesirable and the purpose of this bulletin is to advise operators of inland vessels (barges, manned or unmanned) and operators of marine vessels, that cargo inspectors should at all times be working with a vessel representative in attendance and should not operate vessel equipment.

Clients of IFIA member companies have indicated their support for this approach and their continued cooperation is requested to ensure that their barge and vessel operators provide the necessary supervision for inspectors.

It is the intent of IFIA members that inspectors will rely upon a barge or vessel representative to open or close hatches and to be in attendance during measurement and/or sampling operations. If responsible barge or vessel personnel are not available to allow access to the cargo for measurement or sampling, IFIA member company inspectors will not operate vessel equipment and the cargo inspection process will be delayed until appropriate personnel are in attendance. A Stop Work Authority may be used if appropriate. Should delays occur, they will be for the account of the vessel or terminal and not the inspection company.

By clarifying the responsibilities of the barge/vessel personnel and the inspector, and by removing the uncertainty around this issue, the risk of incidents relating to safety and the environment should be markedly reduced.

Revisions/Reaffirmations

Rev. 1 March 2018

Discussion

Published measurement standards, and industry procedures, contemplate a shipboard environment where key meetings are held involving cargo inspectors and vessel and terminal personnel in order to review and define the cargo operation to be carried out and the responsibilities of those involved. Also, at this time, a member of the vessel's personnel is assigned to accompany the inspector throughout the measurement process.

ISGOTT requires that responsible vessel personnel monitor deck operations constantly throughout cargo operations and it has always been understood that inspectors should not operate any type of equipment on board marine vessels and do not manipulate cargo valves nor connect or disconnect hoses. Such activities are clearly the responsibility of vessel personnel who are familiar with the vessel and, together with the terminal, control the cargo movement.

With barges generally required to be vapor tight, the increase of closed and restricted barge measurement systems, and the use of vapor recovery systems during barge loading and unloading operations, IFIA member companies will apply the same approach to inland vessel operations such that inspectors will not operate any vessel equipment, including but not limited to hatches on barges, and the inspector will rely upon the responsible party for barge operations, the tankerman, to perform these actions.

Vapor control valves

Vapor control valves, which allow measurement and sampling operations to be performed with little or no vapor loss, are now the norm for marine vessels and are becoming more common for inland barges. In common with other vessel equipment, these should normally be operated only by vessel personnel. However, bearing in mind the need to coordinate valve operation with deployment of sampling and measurement equipment, inspectors may operate vapor control valves providing that responsible vessel/barge personnel remain in attendance. It is the responsibility of the vessel to ensure that these valves, connections and any associated adapters and equipment supplied by the vessel are well maintained, clean and fit for use.

References:

IFIA Bulletin 16-01 Stop Work Authority

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